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ABSTRACT

Organizations are directly influenced by the beliefs and values of the employees. Many of these beliefs deal with the meaning of work and preferences for broad classes of work outcomes. A heterogeneous sample of working people (N=318) completed a questionnaire which examined beliefs about work on nine job-related dimensions that distinguish four beliefs systems. A cluster analysis performed on the nine job-related subscale scores indicated that there were five clusters of people who differed in their beliefs about work. A comparison of the means of the five clusters on the subscales revealed that: (1) Cluster 1 tended to hold Protestant Ethic beliefs; (2) Cluster 2 adhered to the Leisure Ethic; (3) Cluster 3 was neutral relative to the other groups on almost all scales; (4) Cluster 4 endorsed more Marxist beliefs than other clusters; and (5) Cluster 5 held a combination of Protestant Ethic and Humanistic beliefs. For most clusters, beliefs from more than one ethic were held. These data suggest that the theory-based work beliefs scale is a superior instrument for measuring the beliefs of workers. (Author/NRB)

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Meanings of Work in Different Environments and Cultures

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Running head: Work Environments

Meanings of Work in Different Environments and Cultures

Environments are an especially rich and varied aspect of organization's existences. Ours is a day when multinational corporations must operate in cultures radically different from that of the home office. This is a time when workers are leaving the unemployment lines of the Northeast for jobs in the Sunbelt--an area that, despite a common nationality and language, often maintains different cultural norms. It is important to understand the impact of differences in relevant environmental factors; the impact may be substantial.

One important part of the environment that affects the design and operation of an organization is the culture of the area. Similarly, one influential component of the culture is the work values system of the local labor force. What do people want from a job? How well do their goals match their company's reward systems? In what ways do people choose to work together? The study of work values is relevant to these, and other, questions. Unfortunately, many organizations have too often ignored workers' values. Instruments may not be readily available to measure them. It may be difficult to evaluate the costs of decisions that ignore employee expectations.

The benefits of locating a printing plant in a small Southern community are immediate: Raw materials can be obtained cheaply. Unionization is unlikely and EEOC problems are rare if the community

has been chosen carefully. Because the firm will be the major employer in the area, the local governments will probably make their goals compatible with the management's goals.

However, there will be costs. Training and recruitment costs may increase. Managers may not wish to transfer to the new location, or they do not remain once they arrive. These personnel costs could be due to a number of reasons. One, often overlooked, is the value system of the locally available work force. The values and lifestyle of those who have transferred to this location may be radically different from the area's norms. One should not forget, for example, that as recently as 1966, Mississippi was legally a "dry" state. A similar example is provided by Hulin (1969).

To summarize, organizations are directly influenced by the beliefs and values of the employees. Many of these central beliefs deal with the meaning of work and preferences for broad classes of work outcomes. Therefore, we feel it is essential to measure employees' value systems. One must have a guide as to what beliefs are central to most workers.

Cultural influences on Beliefs

Anthropological studies have shed some light on the influence of environments on persons' beliefs and goals. For example, Miller and Swanson, (1960) found that fathers employed in large, highly differentiated bureaucracies have children who conform and help others. Parents who were entrepreneurs (or who worked under entrepreneurs) have offspring who are willing to take risks and to be

enterprising (see Berry, 1976; Dawson, 1973; and Sawyer and Levine, 1966; for related studies).

Research on work beliefs in the United States has centered around trying to measure what is called the Protestant Work Ethic (see Weber, 1958; Tawney, 1926; Troelitsch, 1959; and Green, 1959). Blood (1969), Mirels & Garrett (1971), and Wollack, Gooddale, Wijting, & Smith (1971) have all attempted to measure the Protestant Work Ethic. Pinfield (in press) found that most correlations between the different Protestant Ethic measures were between .20 and .50 (nearly all significant at the $p<.01$ level) with the items loading on different factors. These results suggest that the patterns of beliefs called the "Protestant Ethic," may be poorly measured by the instruments that exist. This is because investigators have attempted to take a complex system of beliefs and measure these with a single scale. With the exception of Wollack, et al. (1971), the beliefs are not explicit and vary from scale to scale. Further, simply reporting that a group holds the Protestant Ethic yields little useful information to a manager. One must be able to go beyond the general label and specify the central beliefs the group holds.

Recently, Buchholz (1978) attempted to measure five patterns of beliefs about work: Protestant Ethic, Marxist-related, Leisure Ethic, Organizational Man, and Humanistic beliefs. Each ethic was measured by a single, factorially pure, subscale. What is obscured with this instrument is that it uses five unidimensional scales to measure five

multidimensional concepts, called work ethics. What is needed are scales that are as complex as the constructs they are designed to measure.

An alternative approach to studying work beliefs

It is clear that what people call "ethics" are actually composites of work values. If a work ethic is a pattern of beliefs and values, then one should develop scales to measure these beliefs and values. Obviously, specific beliefs may take many different combinations. However, any groups that tend to respond in patterns similar to one of the theoretical patterns will be of interest. Equally, if not more interesting, will be groups of persons who deviate from the theoretical patterns on some scales.

How does one decide what beliefs and values to measure? From the literature, one finds certain issues important to more than one work belief system. Often different writers take opposite positions on these same work-related issues. It should be possible to construct subscales measuring these issues that (a) are central to at least one work belief system, and (b) distinguish between two or more belief systems. For example, a humanist would prefer compromise whereas a Marxist would be more willing to use confrontation as a method of dispute resolution. This type of approach is superior to the more traditional research methods. Not only can we state that a group embraces, say, the Leisure Ethic, we can also identify important beliefs the group holds that are

not part of the Leisure Ethic belief system. We feel that this approach is more useful to both the theorist and the manager.

Job-related Subscales

Based on the literature on work beliefs, one can identify ten job-related issues that distinguish four beliefs systems. Subscales can be constructed to measure beliefs about each of these issues. These subscales are as follows: (a) Beliefs about a worker-run society, (b) Attitude toward labor unions, (c) Beliefs about the importance of work, (d) How hard should one work? (e) Should free time be spent for business purposes? (f) Should work emphasize intrinsic rewards (such as an interesting task, feelings of accomplishment, and responsibility) or extrinsic rewards (such as pay and fringe benefits)? (g) Are workers basically lazy or hardworking? (h) Should one always seek to resolve conflicts through compromise, or is confrontation an acceptable way to resolve disputes? (i) Should one spend one's free time helping others? (j) Are managers basically exploitive or supportive? These subscales are presented in Table 1. The theoretical position that is thought to be consistent with each of four ethics (Protestant Ethic, Leisure Ethic, Humanism, and Marxist-related) is also presented, with accompanying references. The "Organizational Man" ethic was not included as a separate dimension in this study.

Insert Table 1 about here.

A ten-factor confirmatory factor analysis suggested that two highly correlated subscales, "Workers are:" and "Managers are:" constituted only one factor, and were subsequently combined. A questionnaire was completed by 318 working persons employed on a variety of jobs within the United States. A cluster analysis using Park's (1969) method, was then performed on the nine subscale scores. The results suggested that there are five clusters of people with more than two members. A multivariate Wilke's Lambda, followed by a Rao's R was statistically significant ($P < .01$), indicating that the clusters were not chance groupings.

In order to tell how the clusters differed in their beliefs about work, and to determine the degree to which these groups' belief systems correspond to any of the theoretical systems, it is necessary to compare the group means on the specific subscales. The means are presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here.

Student-Newman-Keuls post-hoc comparisons were used for these analyses. As an example of the results, note the beliefs of Cluster 1. The members of Cluster 1 did not believe that a worker-run society would be ideal. This group also believed in the importance of work and the virtue of working hard. These views reflect the Protestant Ethic.

Cluster 1 members also believe intrinsic rewards of work should be emphasized, a view most consistent with Humanistic beliefs about work. The group is neither high nor low on the other job-related subscales. Therefore, it would appear that this group's beliefs are consistent with the "Protestant Work Ethic." Similar results were obtained for the other clusters, although the data were not always this "clean." Cluster 2 tended to embrace the leisure ethic. The views of the members of Cluster 3 were not distinctive, so no attempt was made to label them. Cluster 4 contained a combination of Marxist, Protestant Ethic, and Leisure Ethic beliefs. Marxist philosophy was stronger among these individuals than among members of the other clusters. The members of the fifth cluster (Cluster 8) hold many of the tenents of the Protestant Ethic, some Humanistic beliefs, a few Marxist-related beliefs and no Leisure Ethic positions.

Discussion

The data suggest that the work beliefs scale is a superior instrument for measuring the beliefs of workers. The clusters appear to have logically-related belief systems. Also, the clusters with the Leisure Ethic, Marxist-related, and Humanistic belief patterns also tended to have relatively high scores on the corresponding Buchholz scales. However, all the Buchholz scales indicate is the degree that persons hold certain nonspecified (although independent) beliefs. With our approach, one can see not only <u>what</u> theoretical ethic describes a person's belief system, one can also see <u>why</u> that ethic is an

appropriate label for those individuals. No one group will endorse any one belief system completely. Groups of people don't come in neat packages. The data from the present study suggest that one theoretical system was dominant in the work values of most people with another theoretical system second in frequency of occurance. It would have been impossible to identify these discrepant beliefs using previous work ethic instruments.

In conclusion, this theory-based approach to studying work beliefs is superior to existing methods. Organizations, in particular, should consider the values and aspirations of employees, particularly when designing tasks and roles (as when opening a new plant). Labor disputes may arise, in part, from clashes in underlying belief systems. No one reward system or motivation strategy will work well with all people; one task of a manager is to understand different workers desires and to make the appropriate rewards contingent upon performance. This method of assessing worker beliefs is a useful guide for the manager interested in understanding employees from different environments and cultures.

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Footnotes

This paper is a synthesis of the second author's Masters Thesis and a chapter written by the first author and Harry Triandis that appeared in the Handbook of Organizational Design, Vol. 1 , Paul C. Nystrom & William H. Starbuck (Eds.), Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Elsevier Scientific. The comments of Blair Sheppard on an earlier version of this manuscript have been greatly appreciated. Charles L. Hulin is Professor of Industrial/Organizational Psychology and Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of Illinois, at Urbana-Champaign. William Ross is a graduate student at the University of Illinois, at Urbana-Champaign.

Table 1

Positions of each of Four Work Ethics on Ten Job-Related Dimensions

Dimension	Ethic			
	Protestant Ethic	Marxism	Humanism	Leisure Ethic
Beliefs about a worker-run society	Opposes *(Fullerton, 1928)*	Favors *(Laski, 1967; Mayo, 1960)*	Favors *(Harman, 1978)*	Neutral
Attitude toward labor unions	Neutral or Anti-Union *No position is mentioned*	Favors *(Laski, 1967)*	Neutral	Favors *(Levitan & Johnson, 1973)*
The importance of work	Yes *(Berger, 1962)*	Yes	Not Necessarily *(Harman, 1978)*	No *(Levitan & Johnson, 1973; Berger, 1962)*
Should free time be used for business purposes?	Yes *(Berger, 1962)*	Neutral	No *(Harman, 1978)*	No *(Levitan & Johnson, 1973; Berger, 1962)*
How hard should one work?	Yes *(Fullerton, 1928; Proverbs 22:29)*	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

Table 1, continued

	Protestant Ethic	Marxism	Humanism	Leisure Ethic
Should work emphasize intrinsic rewards?	Both *(Fullerton, 1928)*	Extrinsic *(Laski, 1967; Mayo, 1960)*	Intrinsic *(Harman, 1978; Foulkes, 1972)*	Extrinsic *(Levithan & Johnson, 1973)*
Workers are:	Evil *(Fullerton, 1928)*	Good *(Mayo, 1960)*	Good *(Maslow, 1954; Alderfer, 1972; Argyris, 1957)*	Neutral
Managers are:	Neutral	Exploitive *(Laski, 1967; Mayo, 1960; Bottomore, 1964)*	Good *(Harman, 1978)*	Neutral
Conflict resolution	Neutral	Accepts confrontation and possible violence *(Laski, 1967)*	Always through cooperation	Neutral
Should one spend one's free time serving others?	Yes *(Berger, 1962; Fullerton, 1928)*	Yes *(Mayo, 1960)*	Yes *(Harman, 1978)*	No *(Levithan & Johnson, 1973)*

Table 2

Student's Newman-Keuls Comparisons
of Clusters on Work Beliefs Subscales

Cluster	WKR $\bar{X}$	WKR SD	UNION $\bar{X}$	UNION SD	IMPTC $\bar{X}$	IMPTC SD	HARD $\bar{X}$	HARD SD	FREE $\bar{X}$	FREE SD	INTR $\bar{X}$	INTR SD	DISP $\bar{X}$	DISP SD	PEOPLE $\bar{X}$	PEOPLE SD	OTHER $\bar{X}$	OTHER SD
1 (n=121)	15.7^{a}	3.5	20.5	4.6	12.2^{cd}	0.9	22.3^{b}	3.4	15.4^{b}	2.8	15.5^{c}	1.2	10.2	2.2	28.9^{b}	4.3	20.8^{b}	3.1
2 (n=10)	14.2^{a}	2.9	20.1	4.0	11.4^{c}	1.6	17.8^{a}	3.4	13.0^{a}	2.4	13.1^{a}	2.0	8.5^{a}	2.0	25.1^{a}	3.2	16.6^{a}	3.6
3 (n=66)	18.8^{b}	4.1	20.9	3.5	10.4^{b}	1.5	21.7^{b}	2.9	15.6^{b}	2.5	14.7^{b}	1.3	10.6^{b}	2.0	28.5^{b}	3.6	20.4^{b}	2.8
4 (n=6)	22.5^{c}	3.8	19.5	3.5	8.8^{a}	3.3	25.8^{c}	3.3	15.3	4.8	13.0^{a}	3.5	10.3	2.7	28.3^{a}	4.5	19.8^{b}	2.9
8 (n=107)	18.2^{b}	3.9	22.2	4.1	12.5^{d}	1.3	25.0^{c}	3.3	17.6^{b}	2.7	16.2^{d}	1.4	10.9^{b}	2.6	32.7^{c}	3.8	23.6^{c}	2.8

Note. Variables with same superscript(s) are not significantly different from one another. They are different from variables with different superscripts, however.

The Work Beliefs Scale Items[a]

Beliefs about a worker-run society

1. Management should be selected by the workers.
2. Any system of work that allows a few people to tell everyone else what to do should be changed.
3. A worker-run society is just some fool's dream; it would never work. (-)
4. Workers could run an organization better than could management.
5. Workers should control the affairs of their company.
6. Worker-owned businesses are the wave of the future.
7. I believe a worker-run society would be a good thing/a bad thing.

Attitude toward labor unions

1. Labor unions are always trying to take advantage of management. (-)
2. The labor union is the guardian of tomorrow's workers.
3. Labor unions exist simply to collect annual dues; they seldom live up to their promises. (-)
4. Unions are essential in stopping the worker from being exploited by management.
5. Unions are turning workers against their employers. (-)
6. Labor unions represent the only hope for the worker.
7. I am basically pro-union/anti-union.

The importance of work

1. The importance of work is trivial compared to other areas of life. (-)
2. Other things should always take second place to work.
3. One cannot live life to its fullest if one has to work. (-)

How hard should one work?

1. To do a poor job on one's work is to be a poor person.
2. The harder you work the better.
3. Hard work is the key to success in life.
4. An individual should work very hard/not work hard at all. (-)
5. You are what you do. To do nothing is to be nothing.
6. If you want to accomplish something you have to fight for it.
7. Hard work never hurt anybody.

Should free time be used for business purposes?

1. An employee, if asked, should be willing to spend his/her weekends entertaining important clients.
2. A person should spend free time promoting the company.

The Work Beliefs Scale Items[a]

Should free time be used for business purposes?

3. A person should help his or her boss during free time.
4. Should free time be spent for business purposes? No, never/Yes always.
5. One should do things during one's free time that directly help the company.
6. On weekends and evenings, an employee should read books that help him/her become a better worker.

Should work emphasize intrinsic rewards?

1. The average job should provide feelings of responsibility.
2. The average job should offer opportunities for recognition.
3. Workers should find satisfaction in knowing that they did as much as they could at work.
4. The most important thing about work is a sense of accomplishment.

Conflict resolution

1. Progress in solving a problem only comes with compromise. (-)
2. People who compromise are people who lose.
3. Compromise often does not work.
4. In general, disputes should be resolved by winning/compromising. (-)

Workers/managers are:

1. Most employees are diligent workers.
2. Workers generally carry out instructions promptly and efficiently.
3. The typical American worker can be trusted to do a good job.
4. A responsible worker is a rarity. (-)
5. Employees are basically hard workers/lazy. (-)
6. Mangers are supportive/exploitive. (-)
7. Most managers make a serious attempt to understand the needs of workers.
8. The typical manager encourages workers to become better individuals.
9. A typical manager is willing to listen sympathetically to an employee who is having troubles at home.

Should free time be spent helping others?

1. I believe that people should devote their free time to helping others.
2. Free time should be spent helping others.
3. People should spend their free time working on community projects.
4. How much of a person's free time should be spent helping others? None of it/All of it
5. Participation in community projects should be important to everyone.
6. My free time is for me and not for anyone else.
7. Every person should do volunteer work.

a (-) means that the item is to be reverse scored.